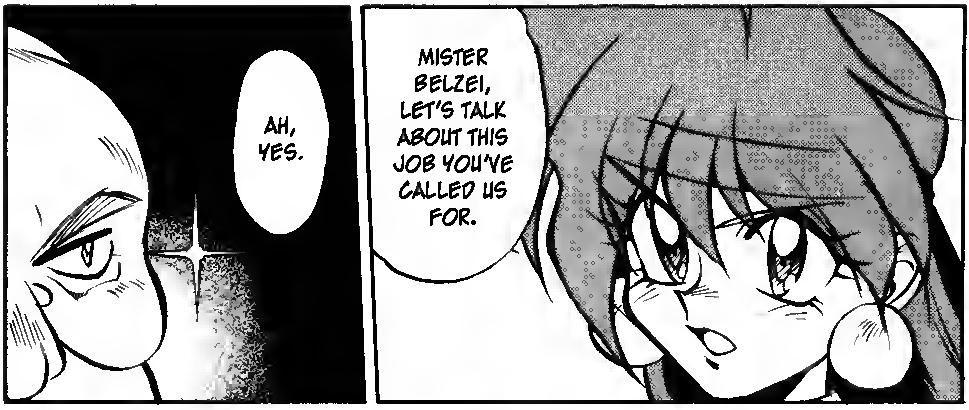
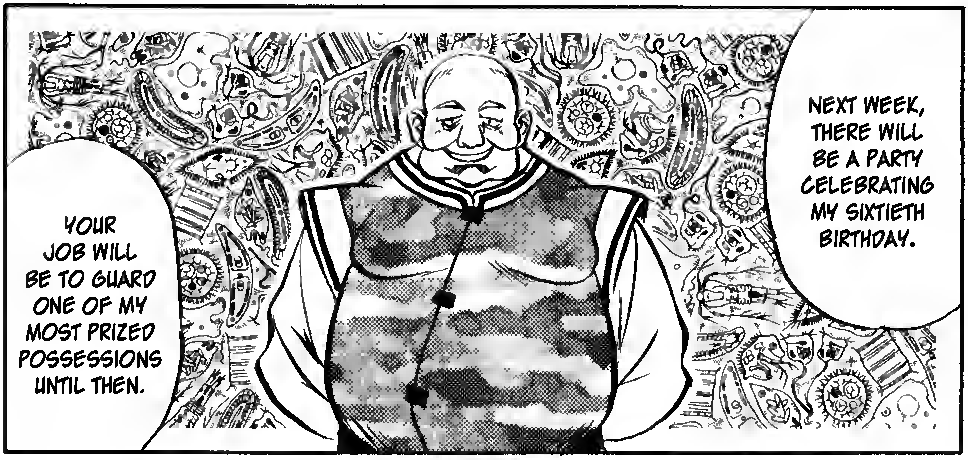
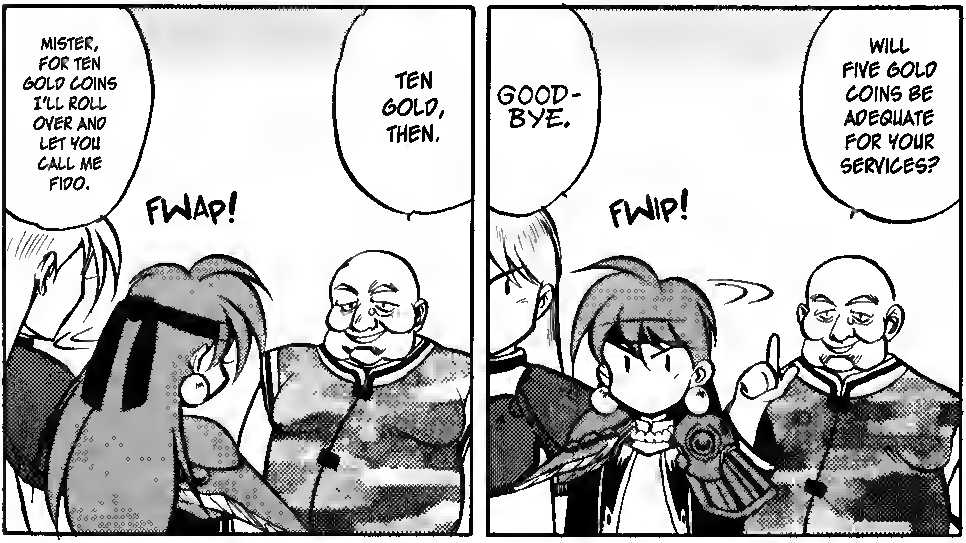
CHAPTER 2 —
GUARD THE GOLDEN MUSCLE!

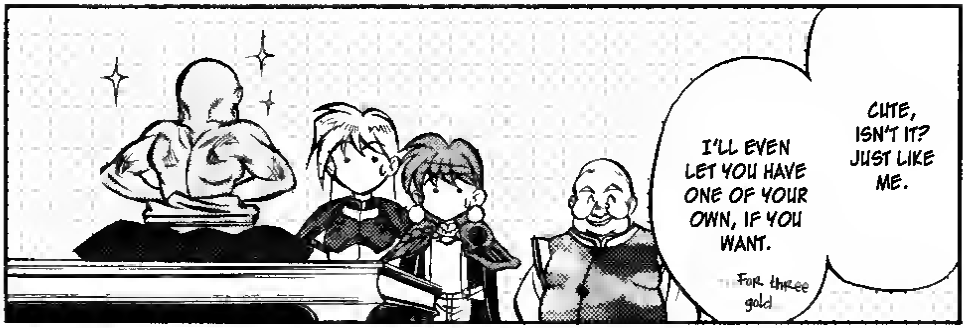
WOW... SOMEBODY'S GOT EXPENSIVE TASTE.
MORE LIKE TACKY.. UGH.
I CAN SEE YOU'RE IMPRESSED. YES, I PRIDE MYSELF ON MAINTAINING AN INN JUST AS FINE AS THOSE IN ATLAS CITY.

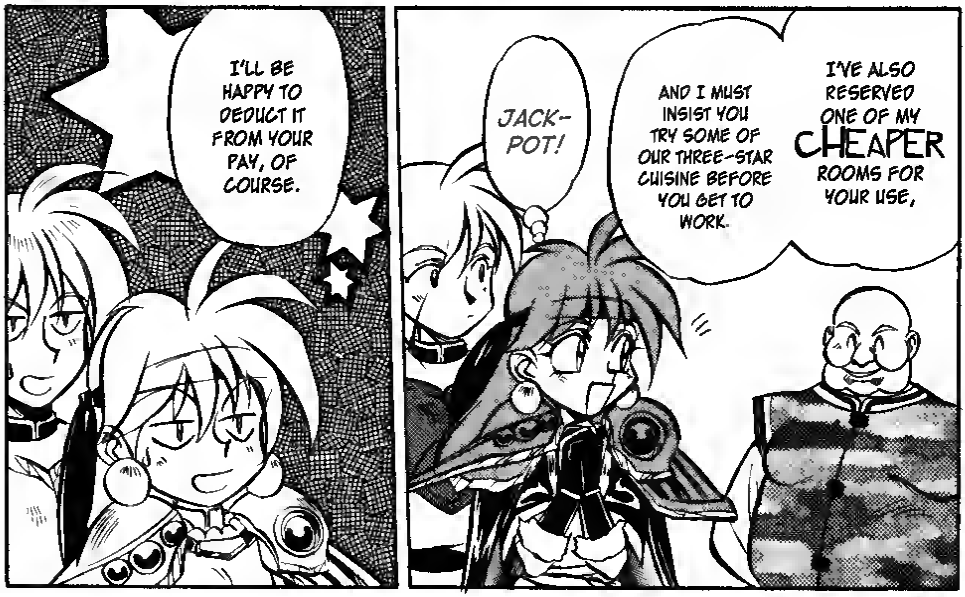

AH, YES.
MISTER BELZEI, LET'S TALK ABOUT THIS JOB YOU'VE CALLED US FOR.


NEXT WEEK, THERE WILL BE A PARTY CELEBRATING MY SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY.
YOUR JOB WILL BE TO GUARD ONE OF MY MOST PRIZED POSSESSIONS UNTIL THEN.


WILL FIVE GOLD COINS BE ADEQUATE FOR YOUR SERVICES?
FWIP!
GOOD-BYE.
TEN GOLD, THEN.
FWAP!
MISTER, FOR TEN GOLD COINS I'LL ROLL OVER AND LET YOU CALL ME FIDO.

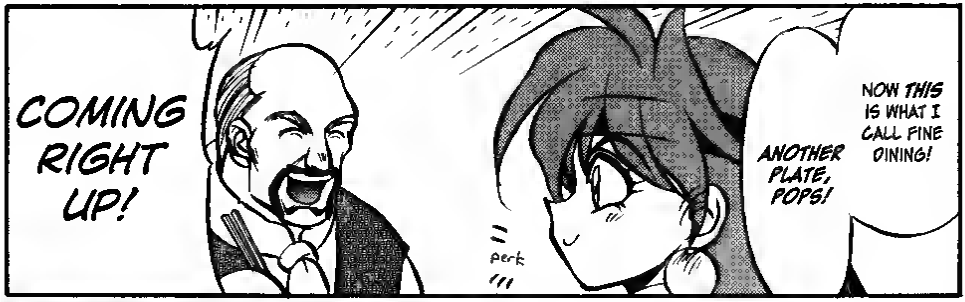
Ta-daaa!
Th. THIS is what we're guarding?
twitch twitch

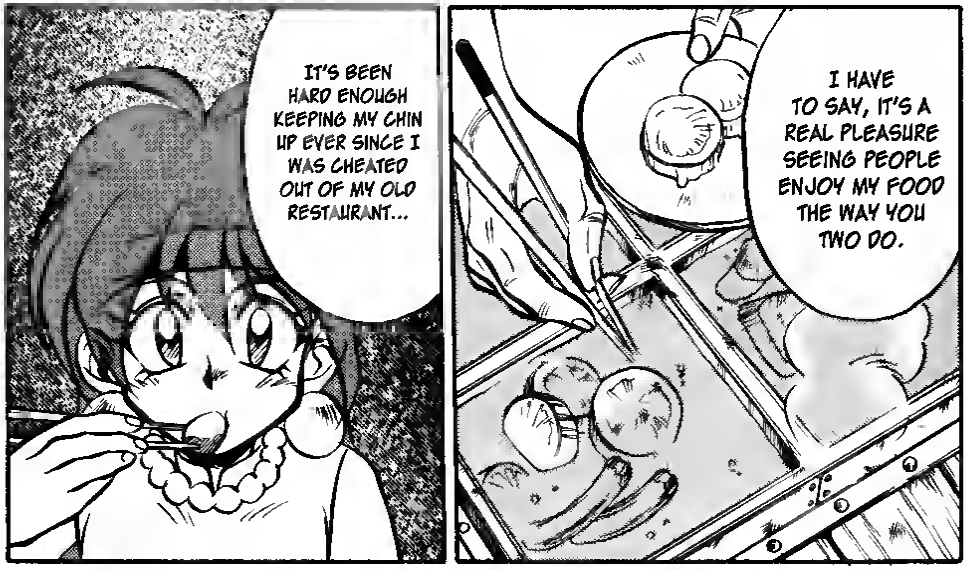

CUTE, ISN'T IT? JUST LIKE ME.
I'LL EVEN LET YOU HAVE ONE OF YOUR OWN, IF YOU WANT.
For three gold


I'LL BE HAPPY TO DEDUCT IT FROM YOUR PAY, OF COURSE.
JACK-POT!
AND I MUST INSIST YOU TRY SOME OF OUR THREE-STAR CUISINE BEFORE YOU GET TO WORK.
I'VE ALSO RESERVED ONE OF MY CHEAPER ROOMS FOR YOUR USE,

WHO DOES THAT CHEAP OLD DIRTBAG THINK HE IS?!

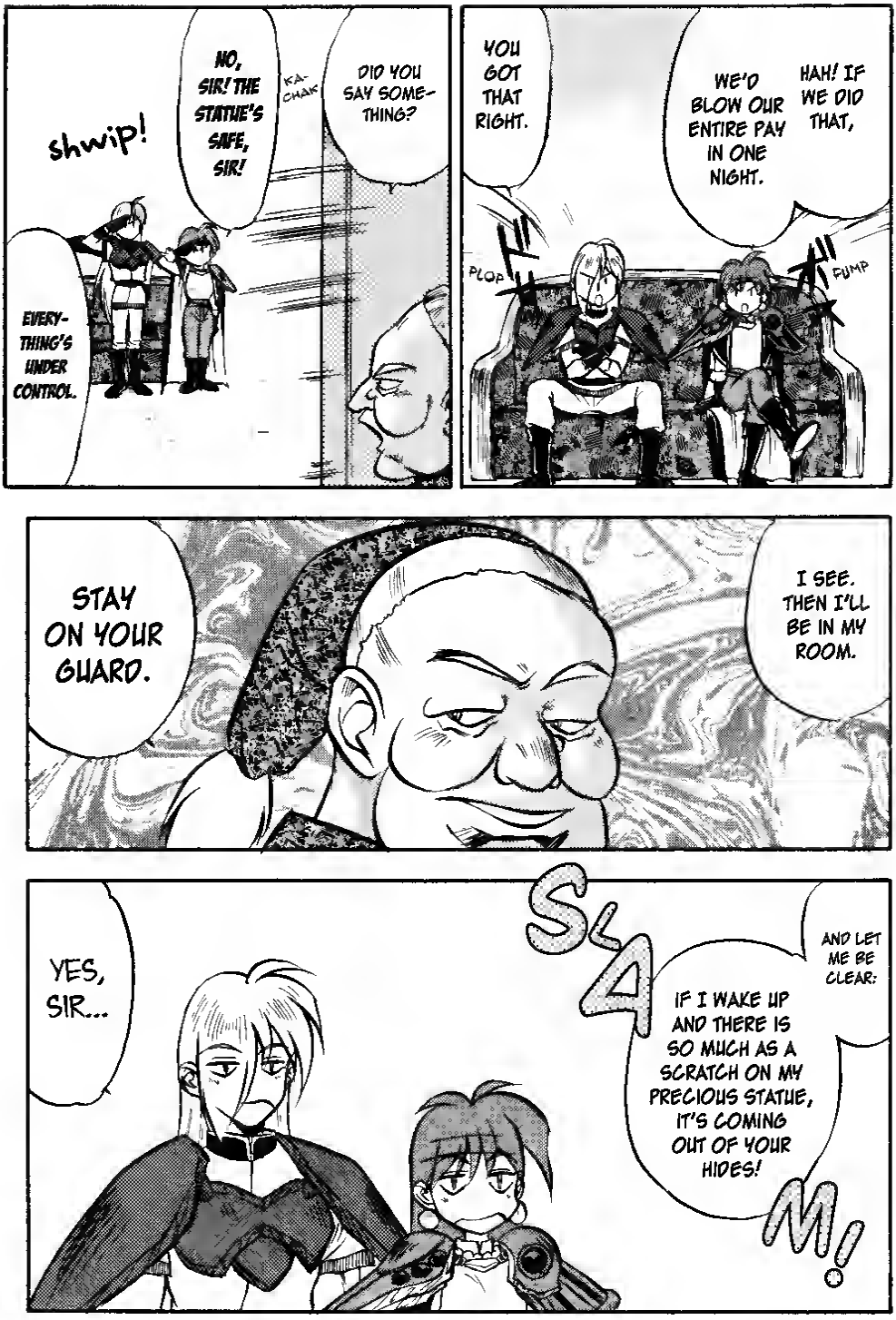
ONE OF MY "CHEAPER" ROOMS, HE SAYS! "FINE CUISINE," HE SAYS! WHAT A CROCK!
BAM!
Right?
YEAH, YEAH... BUT AT LEAST WE FOUND A BETTER PLACE TO EAT, RIGHT?


COMING RIGHT UP!
perk
ANOTHER PLATE, POPS!
NOW THIS IS WHAT I CALL FINE DINING!


IT'S BEEN HARD ENOUGH KEEPING MY CHIN UP EVER SINCE I WAS CHEATED OUT OF MY OLD RESTAURANT...
I HAVE TO SAY, IT'S A REAL PLEASURE SEEING PEOPLE ENJOY MY FOOD THE WAY YOU TWO DO.

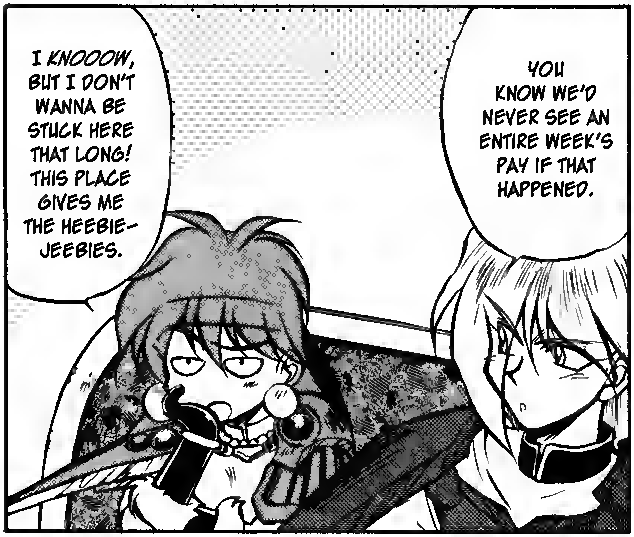
WHO KNOWS HOW LONG THAT'LL TAKE, THOUGH.
BUT SOMEDAY, I'D LIKE TO RE-OPEN IT WITH THE MONEY I MAKE FROM THIS STALL.
WE CAN PROBABLY HELP WITH THAT!
IF YOU WANT, MISTER...
Come back any time!
DOUBLE THAT FOR ME, TOO!
LET'S GO WITH...
A LITTLE OF THAT, THAT, THAT, AND THAT FOR STARTERS!
AW, I MUST SOUND LIKE A REAL PENNY-PINCHER NOW! SORRY 'BOUT THAT, YOU TWO!

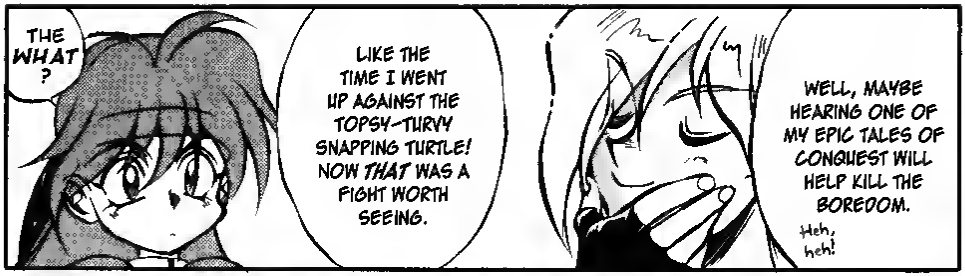
SLAM!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT TIME IT IS?!
WOULD THE TWO OF YOU CARE TO TELL ME WHERE IN BLAZES YOU'VE BEEN?!
YOU TWO LOOK LIKE YOU'RE PREGNANT!
HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO GUARD ANYTHING IN THAT SHAPE?!
URRP!
Sorry, sir...
NO EXCUSES! YOU'RE WORKING FOR YOUR COIN TONIGHT!
SLAM!
I SHOULD HAVE MADE THEM EAT HERE... I COULD HAVE TAKEN IT OUT OF THEIR PAY AND SAVED MYSELF A FEW COINS!
KIDS THESE DAYS...


shwip!
EVERY-THING'S UNDER CONTROL.
NO, SIR! THE STATUE'S SAFE, SIR!
KA-CHAK
DID YOU SAY SOME-THING?
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT.
HAH! IF WE DID THAT,
WE'D BLOW OUR ENTIRE PAY IN ONE NIGHT.
PLOP
PUMP
STAY ON YOUR GUARD.
I SEE. THEN I'LL BE IN MY ROOM.
YES, SIR...
SL4
IF I WAKE UP AND THERE IS SO MUCH AS A SCRATCH ON MY PRECIOUS STATUE, IT'S COMING OUT OF YOUR HIDES!
AND LET ME BE CLEAR:
M!

Ugh...
I'm so BORED.
WOULD IT BE TOO MUCH TO ASK FOR A FEW BURGLARS TO SHOW UP?

AT LEAST THAT WAY WE COULD TAKE DOWN EVERYONE GUNNING AFTER THE STATUE ALL AT ONCE,
THEN CLAIM OUR REWARD AND GET BACK ON THE ROAD...


YOU KNOW WE'D NEVER SEE AN ENTIRE WEEK'S PAY IF THAT HAPPENED.
I KNOOOW, BUT I DON'T WANNA BE STUCK HERE THAT LONG! THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE HEEBIE-JEEBIES.

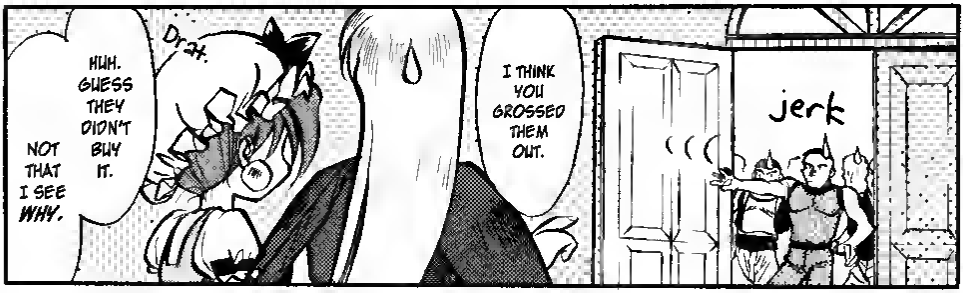

THE WHAT?
LIKE THE TIME I WENT UP AGAINST THE TOPSY-TURVY SNAPPING TURTLE! NOW THAT WAS A FIGHT WORTH SEEING.
WELL, MAYBE HEARING ONE OF MY EPIC TALES OF CONQUEST WILL HELP KILL THE BOREDOM.
Heh, heh!

It's really not.
WHAT? I THOUGHT IT WAS FUNNY.

Mental image of said topsy-turvy turtle.
'CAUSE YOU COULDN'T MAKE HEADS OR TAILS OF WHAT WAS ITS HEAD AND WHAT WAS ITS TAIL. GET IT?

!
KREE...

Step right this way and I'll show you to your rooms!
BAM
Hellooo, gentlemen! We've been expecting you!


Drat.
HUH. GUESS THEY DIDN'T BUY IT.
NOT THAT I SEE WHY.
I THINK YOU GROSSED THEM OUT.
jerk

I'M...
...A WIMP?
WH-
WHO ARE YOU CALLING A LITTLE GIRL?!

WELL, WELL, WHADDO WE GOT HERE?
A BIG WIMP AND A LITTLE GIRL!
YOU'RE THE YAHOOS HE HIRED TO BE HIS GUARDS?

Manslave?
HEY!
You can say what you want about my man-slave Gourry, but NOBODY talks crap about Lina Inverse, sorceress extraordinaire!

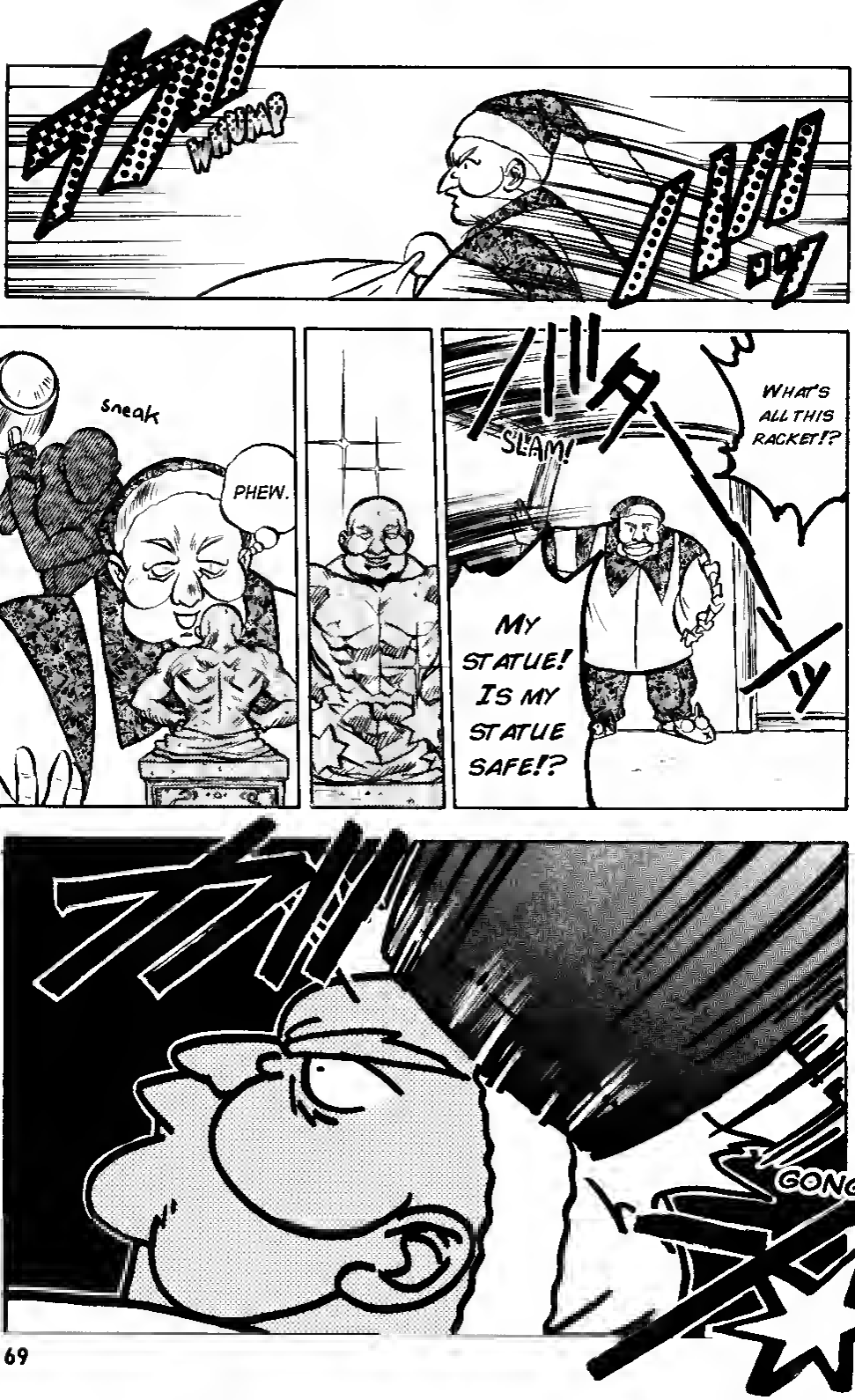
YEAH, YEAH... I'M ON IT.
SIC 'EM, GOURRY!!
OKAY, NOW I'M MAD!

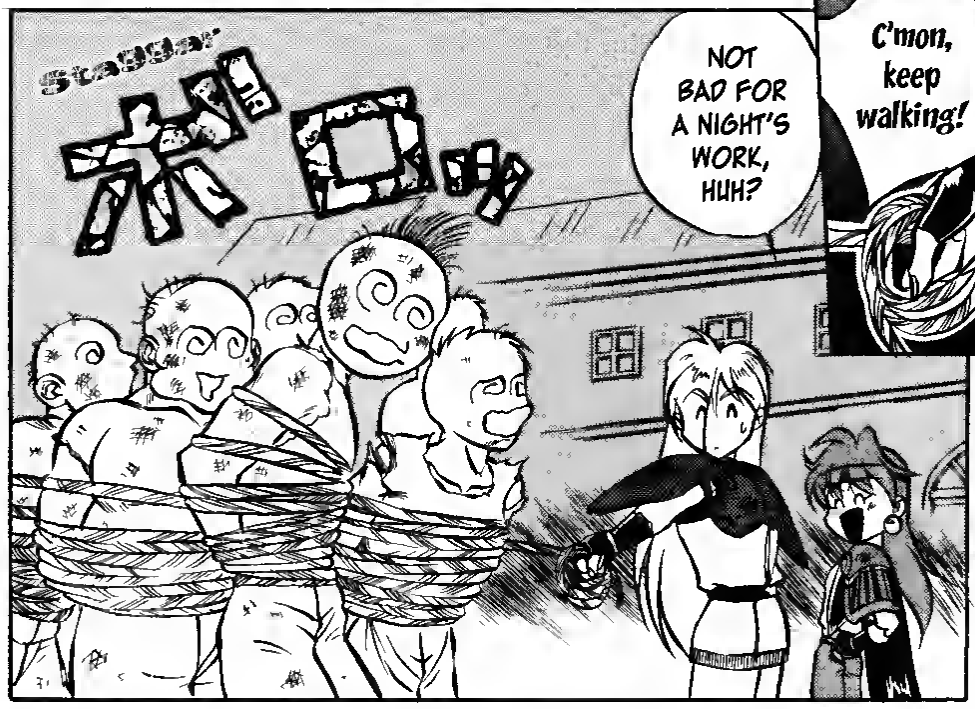
YUH DON'T LOOK LIKE MUCH OF A SORCERESS TO ME, SWEETHEART!
'N YUH CAN'T SAY THAT KINDA CRAP UNLESS YER TITS'RE AS BIG AS YER MOUTH, ANYWAY!
YEAH! NOW RUN ALONG, LITTLE GIRL!

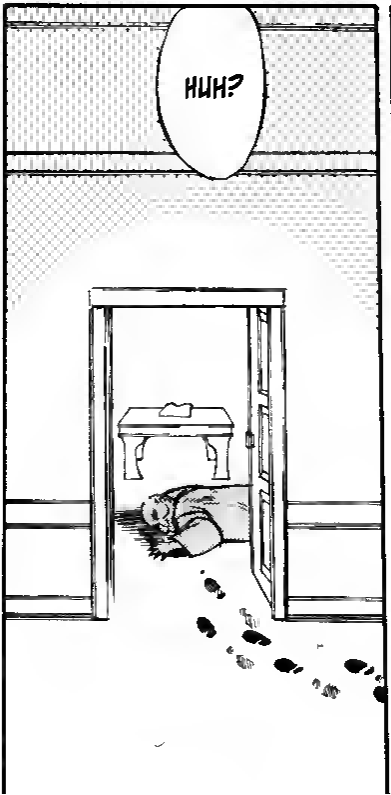
TING!
RAAH!
YOU SONUVA-!
TOO SLOW!!

KA-
TTTING!
Wha?!
Wh-
R-
RUN
FOR
IT!
AW,
CRAP!
THIS
GUY
KNOWS
WHAT
HE'S
DOIN'!

Now prepare to die, jerks!!
ばっ
Whip!
You picked the wrong girl to mess with, mincemeat!
KA-BLAM!
DIL BRANDO!!

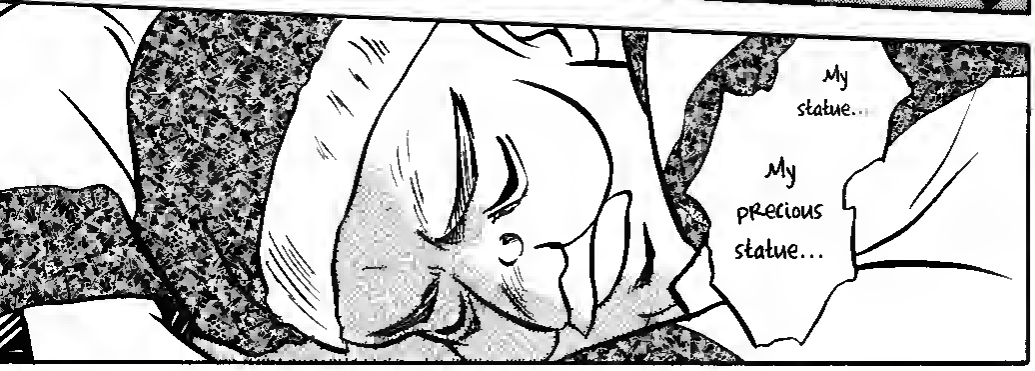

WHUMP
sneak
PHEW.
SLAM!
WHAT'S ALL THIS RACKET!?
MY STATUE! IS MY STATUE SAFE!?
GONG!


Stage 1
ボロボロ
NOT BAD FOR A NIGHT'S WORK, HUH?
C'mon, keep walking!

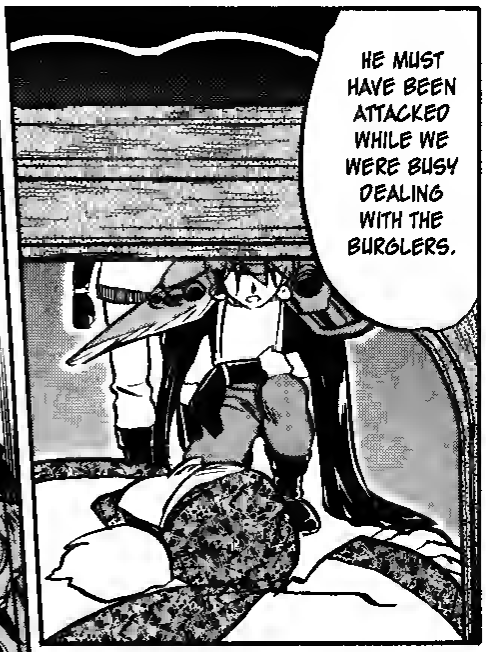

HUH?

NOW TO TURN THEM IN AND COLLECT OUR...

M-
MISTER BELZEI?

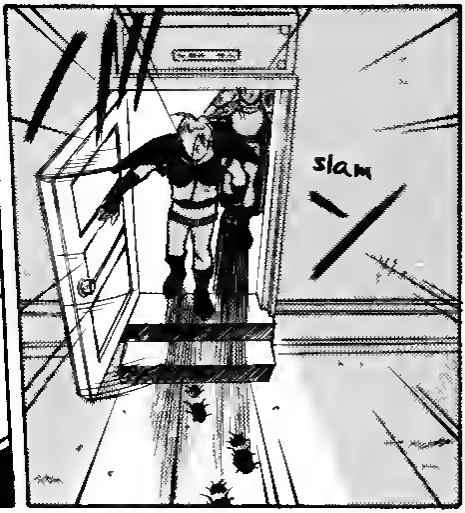

My statue...
My precious statue...

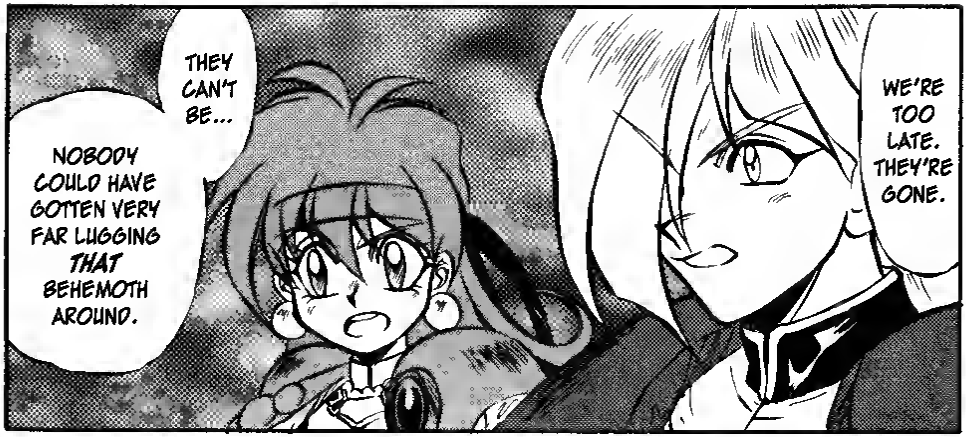
Yeah!
LETS TRACK EM DOWN. GOURRY


HE MUST HAVE BEEN ATTACKED WHILE WE WERE BUSY DEALING WITH THE BURGLERS.

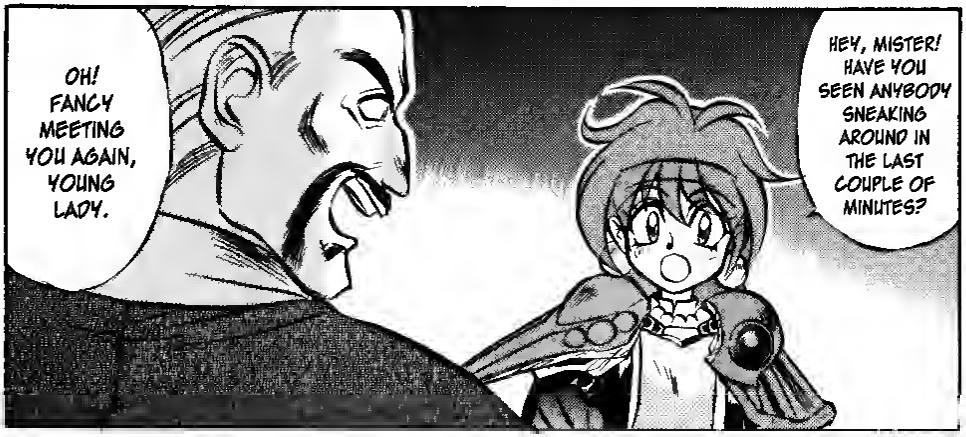
TMP

He went this way, Lina.


slam


WE'RE TOO LATE. THEY'RE GONE.
THEY CAN'T BE...
NOBODY COULD HAVE GOTTEN VERY FAR LUGGING *THAT* BEHEMOTH AROUND.

GOURRY, YOU TAKE THE RIGHT. I'LL GO LEFT!
GOT IT.


HEY, MISTER! HAVE YOU SEEN ANYBODY SNEAKING AROUND IN THE LAST COUPLE OF MINUTES?
OH! FANCY MEETING YOU AGAIN, YOUNG LADY.

I'M AFRAID I WASN'T PAYING TOO MUCH ATTENTION...
!
I WASN'T EXPECTING ANY MORE CUSTOMERS THIS LATE,
SO I WAS BUSY PACKING UP FOR THE NIGHT.

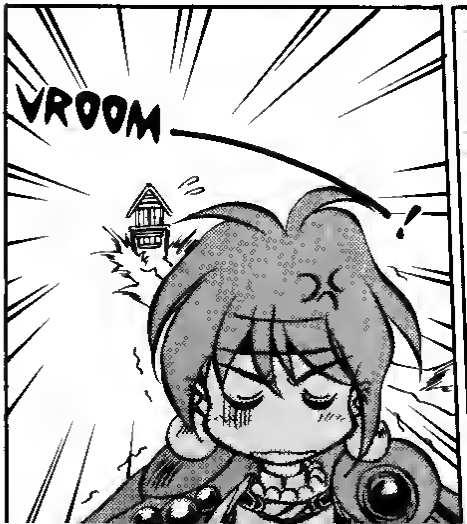
AW, DARN
I GUESS WE LOST 'EM AFTER ALL...
NAH, NOTHING BIG. I'LL TELL YOU WHAT THOUGH, ALL THIS RUNNING AROUND'S MADE ME ALL SORTS OF HUNGRY!
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?
EWIP!
Erp!
YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO HAVE ANY LEFTOVERS HIDING INSIDE HERE...
WOULD YOU?

Uh
M-
M-
M-
M-
Miss? I can exp...
IT'S JUST LIKE I TOLD YOU BEFORE, REMEMBER?
WAIT! I CAN EXPLAIN!
GLARE

THE REASON I WAS CHEATED OUT OF MY RESTAURANT...
glare
WAS BECAUSE MISTER BELZEI SABOTAGED ME!
Huh...?
A LONG TIME AGO, THERE WAS A COMPETITION OVER WHO MADE THE BEST FOOD IN TOWN...
EVENTUALLY IT ALL CAME DOWN TO A MATCH BETWEEN ME AND MISTER BELZEI.
BUT LITTLE DID I KNOW THAT BELZEI HAD SOMEHOW SNUCK A POTENT DOSE OF CASTOR OIL IN WITH MY INGREDIENTS ...
EVERYONE CAME DOWN WITH THE WORST CASE OF THE RUNS YOU'VE EVER SEEN. THE JUDGES, THE TOWNSFOLK... EVERYONE.
IT'S BEEN LONG ENOUGH NOW THAT I CAN QUIETLY RUN MY OWN FOOD CART, BUT IT NEARLY RUINED ME BACK THEN.
IT WAS A DEATH SENTENCE FOR SOMEONE WHO HAD ONLY JUST OPENED HIS OWN RESTAURANT. WHAT LITTLE TRUST THE TOWNSPEOPLE HAD FOR ME VANISHED.

I COMPLETELY UNDERSTAND HOW YOU COULD HATE MISTER BELZEI'S GUTS...
OH, MISTER
SO YOU STOLE THE GOLDEN BUST AS REVENGE...

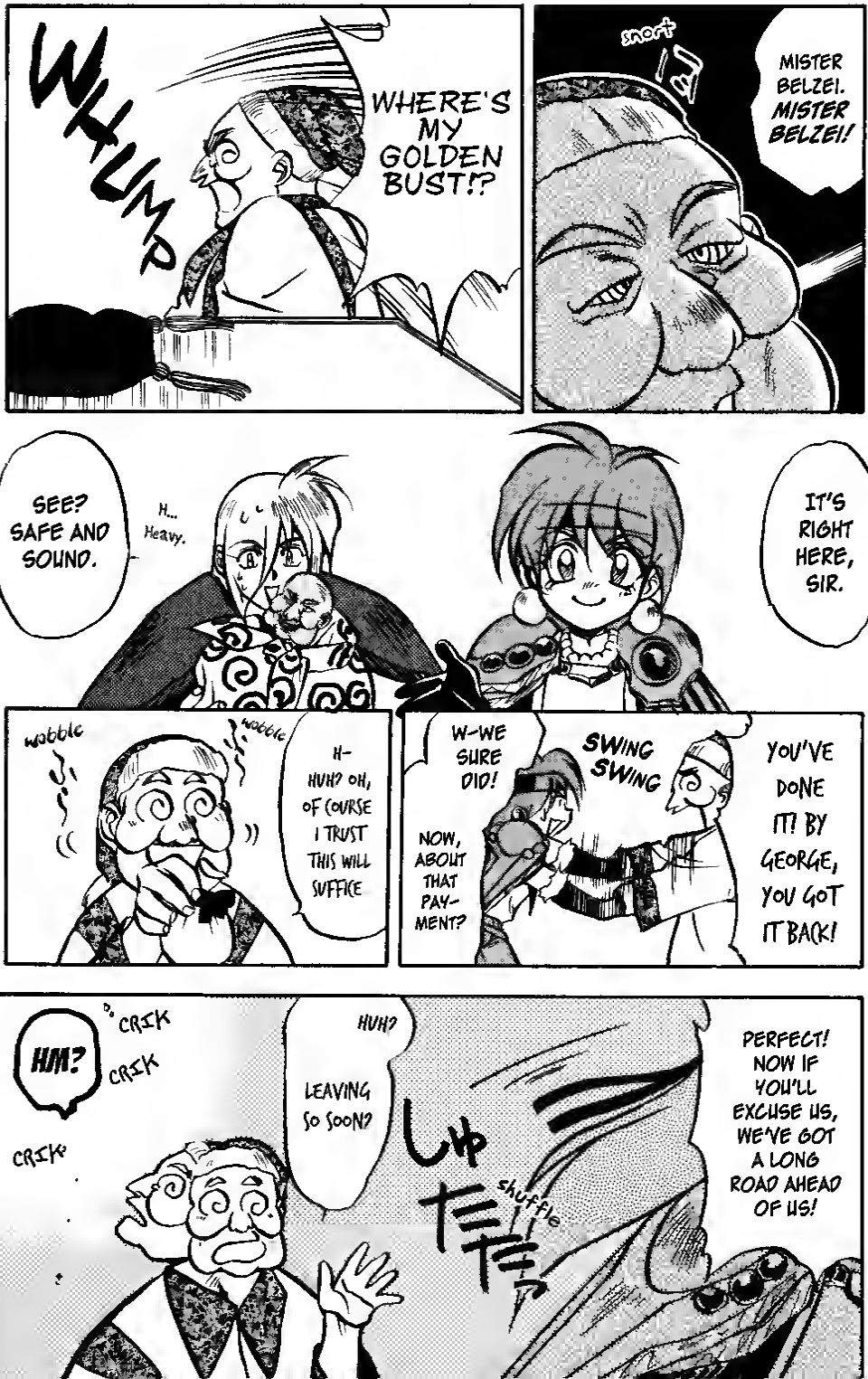
RIGHT?
I KNEW YOU WOULD SEE IT MY WAY, MISS.


VROOM

ka-chank
ka-chank
ka-chank
HUP!
SO...
SEE YOU AROUND!
HM?

OH, NO YOU DON'T!
I'M NOT DONE WITH YOU YET!
MEGA
BRANDO-OOOO!!
BOOM!

UH, LINA...
ARE YOU SURE YOU DIDN'T GO A LITTLE OVER-BOARD?
AHHH! ALL IN A DAY'S WORK.
CLAP CLAP


WHUMP
WHERE'S MY GOLDEN BUST!?
snort
MISTER BELZEI. MISTER BELZEI!
SEE? SAFE AND SOUND.
H... Heavy.
IT'S RIGHT HERE, SIR.
wobble
wobble
H-HUH? OH, OF COURSE I TRUST THIS WILL SUFFICE
W-WE SURE DID!
NOW, ABOUT THAT PAY-MENT?
SWING SWING
YOU'VE DONE IT! BY GEORGE, YOU GOT IT BACK!
HM?
CRIK
CRIK
CRIK
HUH?
LEAVING SO SOON?
Uh
shuffle
PERFECT! NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE US, WE'VE GOT A LONG ROAD AHEAD OF US!

AAAAH!! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO MY INN?!

# Slayers SFDS Volume 1, ch. 02

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